REMARKS

Claims 1-22 have been examined and have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

I. Formal Matters

Applicant thanks the Examiner for acknowledging the claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119.

However, the Examiner did not attach a copy of the Form PTO-1449 filed on September 28, 2001. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner provide an initialed copy of such a document in the next Office Action.

II. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over the combination of Fujita and McCormick

Claims 1-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of Fujita et al. and McCormick et al. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections and submits that the present invention is patentable over these references.

A. Independent claim 1

As a preliminary matter, on pages 2 and 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner seems to imply that the present invention is limited to one processor. Applicant submits that the invention is not necessarily so limited.

Also, Fujita and McCormick do not disclose, teach or suggest all of the features recited in claim 1. For example, claim 1 comprises print data generation means and reply information issuance means. The print data generation means is contained in a host computer and generates print data. The reply information issuance means generates print job data that includes reply

information located in the print data at a predetermined position. Also, the print job data is transmitted to a printer. In addition, claim 1 contains print job data processing means which returns the reply information to a destination that is external to the printer.

On page 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner seems to allege that the status inquiry command disclosed in Fujita somehow corresponds to the reply data. However, in Fujita, the host computer 10 outputs a status inquiry command to the printer 20. Then, based on the command, the printer 20 obtains the corresponding status information from the status information memory 26, and supplies the status information to the host computer 10. (Column 6, lines 6-29). The status information stored in the memory 26 is generated by the status monitor 25 within the printer 20 and is completely independent from the status inquiry command supplied from the computer 10.

As noted above, in claim 1, reply information is supplied to the printer, and the printer subsequently outputs the reply information to a destination that is external to the printer. On the other hand, in Fujita, a status inquiry command is supplied to the printer 20, and the printer 20 subsequently outputs separate and independent status information to a destination that is external to the printer 20 (e.g. to the host computer 10). Accordingly, the disclosed status inquiry command or the status information does not suggest the reply information recited in claim 1.

In McCormick, the Queue Processor 600 sends a status request to a printer via a communication driver and receives status information from the printer via the communication driver 1604. The status information is separate and independent from the status request.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that McCormick does not disclose, teach or suggest the claimed reply information for similar reasons.

Since Fujita and McCormick fail to disclose, teach or suggest all of the limitations recited in independent claim 1, Applicant submits that the claim is patentable.

B. Dependent claims 2-10

Since claims 2-10 depend from claim 1, they are allowable for at least the reasons that claim 1 is allowable. They are further allowable by reason of the additional limitations set forth therein. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection and allow claims 2-10.

C. Independent claim 11

Since claim 11 contains features that are similar to the features discussed above in conjunction with claim 1, Applicant submits that claim 11 is patentable for at least such reasons.

D. Dependent claims 12-19

Since claims 12-19 depend from claim 11, they are allowable for at least the reasons that claim 11 is allowable. They are further allowable by reason of the additional limitations set forth therein. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection and allow claims 12-19.

E. Independent claim 20

Since claim 20 contains features that are similar to the features discussed above in conjunction with claim 1, Applicant submits that claim 20 is patentable for at least such reasons.

F. Dependent Claims 21-22

Since claims 21-22 depend from claim 20, they are allowable for at least the reasons that claims 20 is allowable. They are further allowable by reason of the additional limitations set forth therein. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection and allow claims 21-22.

III. Newly added claims

Applicant has added new claims 23 and 24 to provide more varied protection for the invention. Since such claims contain features that are similar to the features recited in claim 1, Applicant submits that such claims are patentable.

IV. Conclusion

Reconsideration and allowance of all claims are respectfully requested in view of the forgoing remarks. If there remain in issue any points which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, he is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Applicant hereby petitions for any extension of time which may be required to maintain the pendency of this case, and any required fee, except for the Issue Fee, for such extension is to be charged to Deposit Account No. 19-4880.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: December 21, 2001

APPENDIX

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the following claims:

1. (Amended) A printer system including [comprising:] a host computer and a printer for receiving print data from [said] the host computer [and printing based on the print data;] , the printer system comprising:

print data generation means, contained in the host computer, for generating print data;

reply information issuance means for [issuing reply information at a predetermined position of print job data containing the print data;] generating print job data, wherein the print job data comprises the print data and reply information, and wherein the reply information issuance means generates the print job data by locating the reply information at a predetermined position with respect to the print data, and wherein the print job data is transmitted to the printer;

print job data processing means, contained in the printer, for interpreting the print job data, detecting the reply information from the print job data, and returning the reply information to a predetermined destination which is external to the printer;

print control means for printing based on interpretation of said print job data processing means; and

job processing state monitor means for monitoring a processing state of the print [job] data based on the reply information returned from said print job data processing means.

2. (Amended) The print system as claimed in claim 1 wherein said print job data processing means returns the reply information to the predetermined destination after completion of processing of the print data.

3. (Amended) The print system as claimed in claim 1 wherein if the reply information is related to print data concerning a print operation, said print job data processing means checks execution of the print data concerning the print operation before returning the reply information to the predetermined destination.

4. (Amended) The print system as claimed in claim 1 wherein said reply information issuance means issues timing specification information for specifying [_] return timing of the reply information in addition to the reply information, and wherein

said print job data processing means returns the reply information to the predetermined destination at the return timing specified [on] in the timing specification information.

5. (Amended) The print system as claimed in claim 1 wherein said reply information issuance means issues timing specification information for specifying return timing of the reply information in addition to the reply information, and wherein

upon reception of the timing specification information, said print job data processing means returns the reply information to the predetermined destination after completion of processing the print data related to the reply information.

6. (Amended) The print system as claimed in claim 1 wherein said reply information issuance means issues timing specification information for specifying return timing of the reply information in addition to the reply information, and wherein

upon reception of the timing specification information, said print job data processing means returns the reply information to the predetermined destination after checking processing of the print data concerning a print operation related to the reply information.

8. (Amended) The print system as claimed in claim 7 wherein said reply information issuance means issues the timing specification information and the reply information so that the timing specification information, the print data and the reply information are processed by said print job data processing means in this order.

10. (Amended) The system as claimed in any of claims 1 to 9 further including reply information detection means for detecting the reply information returned from said print job data processing means and sending the detected reply information to said job processing state monitor means.

11. (Amended) A printer for printing based on input data, comprising:

reception means for receiving print job data containing reply information and print data;

print job data processing means for interpreting the print job data, detecting the reply information from the print job data, and returning the reply information to a predetermined destination which is external to the printer; and

print control means for printing based on interpretation of said print job data processing means.

12. (Amended) The Printer as claimed in claim 11 wherein said print job data processing means returns the reply information to the predetermined destination after said printer control means completes processing of the print data.

13. (Amended) The printer as claimed in claim 11 wherein if the reply information is related to print data concerning a print operation, said print job data processing means checks that the print data concerning the print operation is executed by said print control means before returning the reply information to the predetermined destination.

14. (Amended) The printer as claimed in claim 13 wherein the print data concerning the print operation is related to at least any one of a paper feed instruction, a paper eject instruction, a page feed instruction, a line feed instruction, and a carriage return instruction.

15. (Amended) The printer as claimed in claim 11 wherein the print job data further contains timing specification information for specifying return timing of the reply information, and wherein

said print job data processing means returns the reply information to the predetermined destination at the return timing specified [on] in the timing specification information.

16. (Amended) The printer as claimed in claim 11 wherein the print job data further contains timing specification information for specifying return timing of the reply information, and wherein

upon reception of the timing specification information, said print job data processing means returns the reply information to the predetermined destination after said print control means completes processing of the print data related to the reply information.

18. (Amended) The printer as claimed in claim 17 wherein the print job data is formatted so that the timing specification information, the print data, and the reply information are processed by said print job data processing means in this order.

19. The printer as claimed in any of claims 11 to 18 wherein said reception means, said print job data processing means, and said print control means can operate in parallel.

20. (Amended) A recording medium recording a program for generating print data to be transmitted to a printer, said recording medium recording:

a print data generation function of generating print data based on an input document;

a reply information issuance function of issuing reply information at a predetermined position of print job data containing the print data; and

a job processing state monitor function of monitoring a processing state of the print job data based on the reply information returned to an external destination from the printer in a format that can be read and understood by a computer.